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sent by e-mail

NEPA Draft Report Comments
NEPA Task Force
Committee on Resources
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC

I am writing to comment on the document entitled *Initial Findings and Draft Recommendations*, dated 21 December 2005.

In my opinion the conclusions and recommendations contained in this report are unsupported by any objective, factual analysis of the implementation of NEPA by the federal agencies. The process used by the Task Force to collect testimony was biased against organizations and individuals who wished to speak in support of NEPA.

I see no evidence that the officials most responsible for implementation of NEPA—the federal agency NEPA Liaisons identified by the Council on Environmental Quality—were ever interviewed or asked to submit their comments and recommendations.

I see no systematic or objective analysis of the adequacy of staff, budget, or agency resources devoted to NEPA.

I see no comment on or documentation of the adequacy of professional experience or training needed for proper agency implementation of NEPA in the federal agencies.

I see instead a pervasive pattern of the Task Force accepting as fact, without independent investigation or analysis, any and all allegations by special interest groups that NEPA has caused unnecessary delays, cost too much money, etc. etc. etc. I do not believe that any objective review of the Task Force's process would be considered fair or unbiased by any fair external review.

I see no justification for ANY legislative recommendation to amend or restrict NEPA because no case has been made that the many administrative avenues already open to the agencies, via the NEPA regulations, consultation with CEQ, or contained in the existing NEPA procedures of the federal agencies have been shown to be inadequate. Prudence alone, as well as good government, would suggest that existing administrative remedies should be shown to have pervasively failed before legislative remedies are pursued.

In my opinion the entire draft report should be scrapped, and further efforts to amend, restrict, or undermine NEPA and the administrative process for implementing it should be abandoned forthwith.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.
Sincerely,

Robert B. Smythe